

AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 43-46.

Please add the following claims:

51. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein the mucoid organism is a microorganism.

52. (New) The method of claim 51, wherein the microorganism is a bacterium.

53. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein the bacterium is characterized as being Gram negative, bacillary, about $0.2 \times 0.8 \mu\text{m}$, facultative anaerobe, grows between 15° and 45°C with a temperature optimum of 37°C , grows between pH 4-11 but not at pH 2, grows in AB13 medium or minimal medium, is motile, lacks a capsule, lacks spores, and produces an elastic, exopolysaccharide with a sugar content of galactose, fucose, glucose, mannose in a ratio of about 1:2:3:6.

54. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein said bacterium produces an exopolysaccharide consisting essentially of neutral sugars migrating at the same rate as mannose, fucose, fructose and galactose, acidic sugars migrating at the same rate as fucose and amine sugars migrating at the same rate as glucose and fucose, wherein the sugar ratio of galactose:fucose:glucose:mannose is about 1:2:3:6.

55. (New) The method of claim 49, wherein the mucoid organism is a microorganism.

56. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein the microorganism is a bacterium.

57. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein the bacterium is characterized as being Gram negative, bacilliary, about $0.2 \times 0.8 \mu\text{m}$, facultative anaerobe, grows between 15° and 45°C with a temperature optimum of 37°C , grows between pH 4-11 but not at pH 2, grows in AB13 medium or minimal medium, is motile, lacks a capsule, lacks spores, and produces an elastic, exopolysaccharide with a sugar content of galactose, fucose, glucose, mannose in a ratio of about 1:2:3:6.

58. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein said bacterium produces an exopolysaccharide consisting essentially of neutral sugars migrating at the same rate as mannose, fucose, fructose and galactose, acidic sugars migrating at the same rate as fucose and amine sugars migrating at the same rate as glucose and fucose, wherein the sugar ratio of galactose:fucose:glucose:mannose is about 1:2:3:6.